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AUTHOR Jacaruso, Yvette C.
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ABSTRACT

The school district in this practicum report was found to be out of compliance by the State Department of Education in the area of writing individualized education plans (IEPs) that contained goals and short-term objectives with measurable student outcomes. Informal workshops were held to provide the special education teachers training for writing IEPs using Robert Mager's model for writing goals and objectives. In addition, the teachers were given Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy and a programmed instruction on how to write appropriate goals and instructional objectives. After the training, analysis of randomly selected IEPs suggested that the writing of objectives improved. Results of a pretest/posttest also indicated that the training was successful. A parent-teacher meeting was held to encourage the parents' participation in the IEP process and brought about many positive interactions among staff, administrators, and parents. Appendices contain copies of questionnaires, teacher pretest and posttest scores, and sample IEPs. (Contains 23 references.) (JDD)

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ED 374 597

Training Special Education Teachers To Write Appropriate Goals and Short Term Objectives With Measurable Student Outcomes For Individualized Education Plans

by

Yvette C. Jacaruso

Cluster 53

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for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier:

Mitchell Stachowicz, Ph.D.

Director Pupil Personnel Services

Box K, Groton Public Schools, Groton, CT 06340
Address

February 18, 1994
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Yvette C. Jacaruso under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

Date of Final Approval of Report

Mary W. Staggs, Ed.D.
Mary W. Staggs, Ed.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Training Special Education Teachers to Write Appropriate Goals and Short Term Objectives with Measurable Student Outcomes for Individualized Education Plans. Jacaruso, Yvette C., 1994: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Management of Programs. Program Development/Parent Participation/Due Process/Individualized Education/Individualized Instruction

This practicum was designed to train special education teachers to write appropriate goals and short term objectives with measurable student outcomes for individualized education plans. Each special education student had a document known as an individualized education plan (IEP) that contained appropriate goals and objectives, determined the student's participation in an appropriate instructional program and specified the appropriate modifications and accommodations needed by the student.

The school district was found out of compliance by the State Department of Education in the area of writing individualized education plans that contained goals and short term objectives with measurable student outcomes. Informal workshops were held for the special education teachers to receive training for writing IEP's. The Mager model for writing IEP's was used as the measurement for writing appropriate goals and objectives with measurable student outcomes. A pre-test was given at the first workshop meeting. The teachers were given Bloom's taxonomy and a programmed instruction on how to write appropriate goals and instructional objectives. IEPs' were randomly selected to be reviewed and visits were made to classrooms.

Analysis of the data suggested that when the teachers became aware that the tools given to them during workshop sessions made their task of writing IEPs easier, the resistance decline and they shared these tools with other teachers and specialists. The comparison between the pre and the post test scores illustrated that the post test scores were significantly higher after the training.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The school district in which this project took place is located in a military-industrial community of 43,000 people. It is the home of a submarine builder, military installation and a pharmaceutical company. Recently the community received shocking news concerning the possibility of closing the naval installation. This base was being recommended for closure by the Secretary of Defense. It suggested that the mission of this Base be changed to training personnel for various naval operations.

This change in mission would result in the school district loosing 1500 students which would translate into closing three schools--two elementary and one middle School. In May, 1993 the Base Closure Commission recommended that the military base remain open and Congress approved this recommendation in July, 1993.

The school system consisted of sixteen schools--twelve elementary, three middle schools and one high school--with a total population of 5,729 students. The district was split between having military schools on the east side of town and civilian schools on the west side of town. There were four elementary schools located in the military housing area with the rest of the elementary schools located in the civilian section

of town.

The socioeconomic make-up of the community ranged from sections being affluent--particularly the west end of town--to middle class and lower-middle class on the east end of town.

Many retired military personnel lived throughout the area because the naval base had a hospital and a commissary store. This made it most convenient for all retired military personnel to receive the necessary medical care free of charge and to grocery shop at discount prices.

This community was the home of two major university satellites. One university satellite specializes in marine biology with excellent facilities for training and the other university satellite specializes in engineering and business administration. Both universities are well-known throughout the United States because of the outstanding programs in their speciality areas.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The school district's central office staff consisted of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of curriculum, director of personnel, director of media services, director of pupil personnel services, business manager and director of grounds and maintenance.

The media center held all the professional journals for the district. It also allows all staff members to use the main computer terminal to do Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) searches and the media staff has gotten whatever materials a staff member wants through inter-library loan.

The district had over four hundred teachers and forty-one administrators. The median age of the teaching staff was approximately fifty years of age with most holding a masters degree.

There were approximately seventy-five pupil personnel and special education staff members. The district had six social workers, four psychologists, six speech and language therapists, one teacher of the blind, one teacher of the hearing-impaired, forty-six special education teachers and eleven guidance counselors.

The district had four special education pre-school programs, nine special needs programs, twenty-four resource room programs for learning disabled and socially and emotionally maladjusted students.

The writer was the supervisor of pupil personnel and special education for kindergarten through grade twelve. It was the responsibility of the supervisor to evaluate thirty teachers of learning disability and learning skills. There were approximately five hundred students in the learning disability and learning skills programs in the school district. Another responsibility for this writer was to provide in-service training for the regular and special education teachers in the area of special education. The writer was the Title IX Coordinator for the district which included the responsibility of serving as the compliance officer for the school district on sexual harassment and was the chairperson of the central office quality team.

The writer had a varied background in the business and education fields. Positions held in the field of business included an accounts payable clerk, administrative assistant and supervisor of central information for a military installation.

After having three children, this writer entered college and received an undergraduate degree in elementary education. It took six years to complete the undergraduate program. The writer entered graduate schools immediately and received a grant to complete the masters program in special education. After teaching in special education for one year, the writer enrolled in a sixth year program in administration and supervision and received this diploma in 1983.

In the writer's second career in the field of education, the experiences have been varied. The first position held in education was as a regular education teacher then a special education teacher in a pre-school program. From this position the writer became a teacher of learning disabled students at the elementary level then an assistant principal at the same level. From the position of assistant principal, the writer became the district supervisor for pupil personnel and special education.

The writer has been active in the community as a volunteer for the Heart Association, Cancer Fund and political candidates. The writer has also been active in the church as a member of the parish council.

The writer has given district-wide workshops on pre-school assessment, least restrictive environment and educational evaluation instruments. The writer was also a member of the

district-wide professional development committee.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Based on the student's present level of performance, the individualized education plan (IEP) contains annual goals and short-term objectives. The short-term objectives are the breakdown or task analysis of the stated goals. The objectives are written in measurable terms (Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb & Niven, 1986; Mager, 1962; Popham, 1993; Smith, 1990; Strickland & Turnbull, 1990; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992) so that the IEP team can determine what progress has been made in attaining the annual goals.

The district's special education teachers were not writing short-term objectives that were stated in measurable terms so that learner outcomes could be determined. The lack of written measurable short-term objectives caused problems when special education students were placed in a mainstreamed class. The special education teacher and the regular education teacher could not communicate effectively because neither teacher could accurately articulate what skills the student had or had not mastered (Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb & Nevin, 1986). As Mager (1962) stated "An objective is an intent communicated by a statement describing a proposed change in a learner--a statement of what the learner is to be like when he has

successfully completed a learning experience" (p. 3).

The IEP was a vehicle of communication between teachers, parents and students. If the communication in the form of the IEP was not clear and concise then there was a lack of direction for the students' learning.

The problem was that appropriate IEP's were not developed and therefore not implemented by special education teachers in the district. It appeared that teachers did not know the difference between goals and objectives as indicated on the students' IEP. Some of the objectives were goals and some of the goals were really objectives.

Problem Documentation

The documentation of the problem was noted in the October, 1992 Compliance Review conducted by the State Department of Education. The noncompliance issue was that the district's IEPs lacked short-term target objectives which were stated so that student outcomes could be measured. Another difficulty with the IEP was that the modifications in regular education were missing from this document. When the Director of Pupil Personnel Services presented the noncompliance issues to the staff members at a general meeting there were many questions from the staff members on how to write an appropriate short-term objective.

The school district's Operations Manual for Special Education stated that the short-term objectives must be written in measurable terms and address the modifications in the regular classroom. The State Department of Education had a booklet with commentary on the special education general

statutes to clarify the regulations as they relate to the law and regulations governing special education.

The IEPs included the necessary component in meeting the mandates of P. L. 101-476 (IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). The reauthorization of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 is now known as IDEA (Council of Exceptional Children, 1992). The State guidelines also provided direction for the districts regarding children requiring special education.

Causative Analysis

The writing of individualized education plans by special education teachers was a very lonely task at the planning and placement team (PPT) meeting. A study by Morgan and Rhode (1983) concludes that special education teachers received little help when developing the IEP at the PPT meeting from other teachers, evaluators and program administrators. The special education teachers reported that they implemented the program with little assistance from anyone (Morgan & Rhode, 1983). As Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1990) stated, "The IEP is one factor that differentiates special education from regular education" (p. 18). This document called an IEP had great ramifications for a student's future which may in some way impact positively or negatively on the special education student's education (Rothstein, 1990).

Because the special education teachers seemed to develop this important document on their own, why should they bother to write quality goals and objectives? They received this message

frequently at the IEP meetings. The writer had been present at many meetings where the majority of the team members excused themselves when the time approached for the development of the IEP. This process was time-consuming and the building administrators view it as a task for the special education teacher as well as a task that was pulling staff members out of the classroom. It is no wonder that the special education teachers frequently do not write quality IEPs! The message was delivered through the actions of the PPT team members.

Another observation made by the writer was that special education teachers do not get involved with mediations and hearings when a parent was pursuing their due process rights. Whenever the writer was involved in a mediation or hearing, it was always the IEP that was reviewed carefully by the mediator or hearing officer. Many, many questions were asked about how the team came up with these particular goals and objectives for this special education student. Were they derived from the evaluations conducted? What kinds of evaluations were used? Can these goals and objectives be met in regular education or special education placement or a combination of both environments? Is the regular education curriculum appropriate? The teachers seemed to be unaware of the seriousness of the IEP at this level of review and examination because as previously stated, the teachers frequently were not involved at this level.

Is the pre-service training in writing appropriate goals with measurable short-term objectives that teachers received at the undergraduate and graduate level appropriate? (Smith &

Simpson, 1989) The training could be part of the problem but it also suggest that teachers were unable or unwilling to adhere to the guidelines of the Education Handicapped Act to provide "specially designed instruction" for special education students (Smith & Simpson, 1989). Teachers regarded the IEP as providing them with an outline for instruction but they did not view them as a working document for daily instruction (Dudley-Marling, 1985).

Another reason for poorly written IEPs was that parents did not know how to ask the right questions during the meeting. The parents were unaware that this document called an IEP is supposedly developed by the team to give specialized instructions to meet the needs of the identified student. The parents were also unaware that this IEP was a legal document which drive this student's education and should contain present levels of performance, category of disability, appropriate goals with measurable short-term objectives, the environment where the goals and objectives will be delivered, the amount of integration between regular and special education students and teachers and the related services needed if any. IEP meetings can be intimidating for parents and some parents may not be given the opportunity to ask pertinent questions or participate in any other way at these meetings (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Lytle, 1988; Myers & Blacher, 1987).

Parents were the focal point in PL 94-142 Education for the Handicapped now known as IDEA PL 101-476. Their rights were cited in state and federal laws that they be an active

participant in their child's assessment, program development, and evaluation (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987). Yet, parents were intimidated when they arrived for a PPT meeting. The school team was sitting on one side of the table with at least four or five specialists and the parents or parent were on the other side of the table. Just the number of people on the school team was frightening to parents (Lytle, 1988).

Many times the IEP was prepared prior to the meeting and this limited the amount of communications between parents and school staff when they were presented with this completed document (Gartner and Lipsky, 1987). A decision had already been made concerning their child without any input from the parents. The law stated that parents were partners and active participants in this team process of developing an appropriate program for their child. Many times this team effort did not include the parent.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

An important resource in helping staff members write measurable behavioral objectives was Robert Mager's primer entitled Preparing Instructional Objectives (Mager, 1962). This primer has been used by federal officials to measure student growth in programs that receive federal monies to remediate student deficiencies in academic subjects (Popham, 1993).

Another reference the writer's State Department of Education cited in writing measurable short-term objectives is Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Handbook I Cognitive Domain. It suggested in the

state department's handout that if teachers used words that could be measured and observed such as to write, demonstrate, solve, diagram, design, and rank, they wrote correct short-term objectives that were measurable.

There was some discussion in the literature about trivializing instructional objectives by task analyzing each one (Popham, 1993). There must be agreement from team members about how much task analysis had been done with each objective. Too much breaking down of the objective caused teachers to lose sight of what the student outcomes should be.

Measurable objectives are being debated in the literature frequently. Smith (1990) reported that the IEP was a "blueprint for appropriate instruction and delivery of service" (p. 85). Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1990) reported that the IEP should be a reflection "of the curriculum that a student in special education receive" (p. 18). Gartner and Lipsky (1987) suggested that parents had very little input into the development of the IEP and that the IEP in many cases was developed before the meeting (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987).

The IEP was viewed as a point of weakness during a compliance review because of its specificity. The IEP became delimiting for teachers and trivialized the curriculum when implementing this document for mildly handicapped students (Lytle, 1988; Singer & Butler, 1987). Secretary of Education Terrel Bell suggested that the IEP should only be "general benchmarks" and not be written in short-term measurable objectives (Federal Register, 1981).

After Secretary Bell made this statement concerning the non-specificity of IEPs, some teachers reported that this gave them more freedom when implementing a program for special education students. Other teachers felt that the non-specificity left much to be desired when implementing the IEP. What was it that a student should accomplish and how did one know that it had been accomplished when the IEP was vague? (Singer & Butler, 1987).

The student's level of performance and the type of instruction the student received was the substance of special education and the tailor-made instructional program (Smith & Simpson, 1989). Smith and Simpson's (1989) study of analyzing IEPs, reported that "substantial number of IEPs written for students with behavior disorders fail to function as effective instructional guides". (p. 115)

Some professional educators considered the IEP as hampering the delivery of instructional objectives and reported that the link between objectives and quality programming for special education students were not related (Dudley-Marling, 1985; Morgan & Rhode, 1983).

The literature cited that there was a lack of congruence between the student's present level of performance and the IEP's goals and short-term objectives (Schenck, 1981; Smith & Simpson, 1989). Many IEPs did not provide specially designed instruction for special education students. Also when objectives were written they were not stated so that student outcomes could be measured (Goldstein & Turnbull, 1982; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, &

Thurlow, 1992). Parent participation was lacking when developing an IEP; the implementation and monitoring of objectives in the student's program was not followed closely by a designated person (Basile & Thabet, 1987; Goldstein & Turnbull, 1982; Morgan & Rhode, 1983; Strickland & Turnbull, 1982; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Thurlow, 1992).

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of the practicum was that each special education student would have a document known as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that contained appropriate goals and objectives, determined the student's participation in an appropriate instructional program and specified the appropriate modifications and accommodations needed by the student.

The writer expected that the special education teachers would write individualized education plans containing all of the required components.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes were:

1. The IEP would be a working document that drives the student's educational program.
2. The IEP would include:
   a. the student's current level of educational performance
   b. appropriate annual goals
   c. short term objectives that are measurable
   d. any needed related service
   e. extent of time student will participate in the regular education program
   f. projection of dates the program will start and end
   g. appropriate objective criteria, evaluation procedures and time-frame for determining accomplishment of short-term objectives on at least a yearly basis (Strickland & Turnbull, 1990).
3. Parents would actively participate in the

development of their child's IEP.

4. Parents would understand their rights and the rights of their handicapped child in relation to the IEP.
5. The teacher would utilize the IEP to plan the student's instructional program.

After the required information was on the IEP, the teachers would plan instruction accordingly and utilize the plan to measure the accomplishment of the objectives or progress in assessing the student's program.

As the literature had revealed, there was much discussion about how specific an objective should be. Some teachers felt that if it were too specific, curriculum would be reduced to triviality (Lytle, 1988; Singer & Butler, 1987). The IEP would be pertinent to the daily instruction delivered to the special education students to meet their needs (Strickland & Turnbull, 1990).

Measurement of Outcome

The following three-prong plan was implemented to analyze the results of the outcomes.

The writer spot checked ten IEPs weekly randomly selected by the secretary. The IEPs were reviewed using Mager's (1962) standard for writing appropriate goals and objectives and Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia (1956) Taxonomy. The writer gave feedback to the teachers.

The feedback provided teachers with directions when writing IEPs. Because of this feedback, teachers wrote IEPs containing

goals and short term objectives with intermediate objectives to meet the stated goals so student outcomes could be measured.

The teachers wrote IEPs containing every component necessary to comply with federal and state regulations so that the district would be in compliance. A school district out of compliance had serious ramifications for funding. The federal and state agencies can withhold monies if the district did not rectify the non-compliant issues.

The writer developed a parent questionnaire to gather data from parents concerning their understanding of the IEP process (Appendix A). Did they understand such term as present levels of performance, goals and short term objectives, related services and least restrictive environment? There was a strong correlation between parent involvement in education and student achievement (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992).

A copy of the Compliance Officer's guidelines for writing objectives to measure student outcomes was used as the writer's guide. This was to be sure that the district was in compliance in this area.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Special education teachers were not writing IEPs for their students that meet state and district requirements. Based on the student's present level of performance, the individualized education plan must contain annual goals and short term objectives. The short term objectives were the breakdown or task analysis of the stated goals. The objectives were written in measurable terms (Mager, 1962; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992; Strickland & Turnbull, 1990; Smith, 1990; Popham, 1993; Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb & Nevin, 1986) so that the IEP team determined what progress had been made in attaining the annual goals.

Informal workshop sessions were held for the special education teachers to review the non-compliant areas and to receive training for writing IEPs. After reviewing with the teachers the areas of non-compliance, the writer used the Educational Planning Model Programmed Course for Writing Performance Objectives (Balasek, Kelleher, Lutz & Nelken, 1978).

A pre and post test was given to the participants to measure awareness and accuracy of information (Appendix B). These questions came from Mager's book on writing IEPs (1962).

The criterion for mastery was 90% accuracy on the post test.

The writer developed a questionnaire on specifying annual goals and short term instructional objectives based on Strickland and Turnbull (1990) works (Appendix C). Strickland and Turnbull (1990) reported that annual goals were the anticipated progress a student made during a one year period in a specially designed program of instruction. Where the student might be at the end of one year was an estimation of the student's progress. The progress was based on the fact that a sequence of instruction was followed. In making estimation about projected student progress, the following criteria was considered (Strickland and Turnbull, 1990):

1. The student's past achievement
2. The student's present levels of performance
3. The student's preferences
4. The practicality of the chosen goals
5. The student's priority needs
6. The amount of time to be devoted to instruction related to the goal

Short term objectives were measurable and considered the intermediate steps between the present level of performance and the annual goals. The short term objectives were specific and sequential and this was accomplished by task analyzing the objectives (Strickland & Turnbull, 1990). Task analysis skills required skills broken down into small components in sequential order.

Objectives were stated behaviorally and include the following elements (Strickland & Turnbull, 1990):

1. A statement of the expected behavior
2. A statement of the condition under which the behavior occurred

3. A statement of the criteria for attainment

Special education teachers and the writer reviewed the objectives of the regular education curriculum to determine the objectives appropriateness in developing an IEP. The writer kept the notation of the recommendations from the special education teachers.

Description for Solution Selected

It was difficult to measure special education students' progress if the short term objectives on the individualized education plan were not specific. When special education teachers wrote individualized education plans with short term objectives which were stated so student outcomes could be measured then the district was in compliance in the area of writing appropriate objectives.

The writer met at least once monthly with the learning disability and learning skills teachers. During these informal meetings, mini-workshops were held in an atmosphere that was non-threatening.

There was much concern about the writing of IEPs and how the specially designed instructions were not carried out by the teachers (Bilken, 1989; Lytle, 1988; Singer & Butler, 1987; Smith, 1990; Smith & Simpson, 1989; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Thurlow, 1992). There was still a debate going on about how specific the objectives for a student should be (Strickland & Turnbull, 1990).

The above documentation concerning the issues of writing IEPs was not only in the writer's district. The documentation was presented to the special education teachers to make them

aware that many districts were working on this same compliance issue.

Writing measurable short term objectives was addressed because of the compliance review. Mager's (1962) work and Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia taxonomy (1956) were two excellent references to use in becoming more proficient in writing student outcomes in measurable terms.

An objective according to Mager (1962) "Is a description of a pattern of behavior (performance) we want the learner to be able to demonstrate" (p. 3). The reasons objectives were stated in measurable terms according to Mager (1962) was that the teachers must clearly defined goals on what it was they want their students to be able to do after the instruction was completed and to measure the students performance in terms of those goals.

According to Mager (1962) an objective had the following components:

1. Identify the terminal behavior by name
2. Describe the important conditions under which the behavior will occur
3. Specify the criteria of acceptable performance

As the teachers wrote measurable objectives, they separated each into different hierarchical cognitive operations. Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia (1956) taxonomy provided the teachers with this guidance when they broke down the objectives. The taxonomy consisted of six different levels of operation--knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, syntheses and evaluation. Knowledge was the lowest level and evaluation was the highest level of operation in the cognitive domain

(Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1956).

Along with the taxonomy, certain verbs were used at the different cognitive levels. If a teacher wrote an objective on the application level, verbs such as solve, classify and define were used when writing the objective. Objectives were combined under larger objectives because when there were too many objectives, the objectives became too insignificant and unwieldy to handle (Ltyle, 1988; Popham, 1993; Singer & Butler, 1987).

Curriculum was examined closely because this seemed to be the area where special education teachers focused their energy when writing IEPs. The curriculum gave direction for the students' achievement and held high expectation with different curriculum options available (Basile, 1987). The students' IEPs with its objectives were tied in to the system-wide curriculum (Basile, 1987).

Strickland and Turnbull (1990) provided information that was timely, concise and full of appropriate examples on how to develop and implement an IEP with all the required components written in measurable terms with student outcomes. This helped teachers by providing them with concrete examples of the meaning of all the verbiage that was required by the regulations.

Report of Action Taken

The writer met monthly with the teachers to review the requirements of writing IEPs that contained all the required components and were stated so that student outcomes were measurable. The writer reviewed the individualized education plans and visited classrooms weekly to determine if

the IEP was the vehicle which was driving the student's program. The writer gave weekly feedback to the special education teachers on the status of their proficiency in writing measurable short term objectives.

The writer scheduled monthly workshops for the special education teachers and also a special meeting for parents of special education students. At the first workshop meeting, a pre-test was given to the special education teachers on writing appropriate individualized education plans. The teachers felt it was too early in September to be taking a test on writing IEPs. Many teachers struggled through this process. When the writer randomly reviewed the IEPs and gave the teachers feedback, some of the teachers were annoyed and others welcomed the review.

The materials that were given to the teachers such as Bloom's taxonomy and a programmed instruction on how to write appropriate goals and instructional objectives allowed the teachers to become aware that these were tools that would make the writing of IEPs much easier. The decrease in resistance to the writer's suggestions and the increase in the number of teachers who asked to have their IEPs reviewed validated the writer's approach to solving the problem. As soon as the teachers realized that these tools made their task easier, the process went smoothly.

The writer's unannounced visits to the classrooms proved most interesting. When the writer asked how they developed their lesson plans, some teachers said based on what the student had previously accomplished. Other teachers said that they used the

IEP as their bible. Some of the teachers had to go to the file to retrieve the IEP because it was not readily available. The teachers who used the IEP as their bible, had the document on their desk or in close proximity. These teachers told the writer that they referred to the IEP almost daily and always used it to write their lesson plans.

The parent meeting with the special education teachers was very successful. The parents were very much interested in talking to other parents about their children's disabilities. It was like a support group for many of the parents. They asked the teachers many questions about learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder and also asked that evening meetings be held so parents could hear and discuss any new information concerning disabilities.

At the last workshop meeting, the teachers took the post-test on writing appropriate IEPs. The teachers expressed a relief that they would not be so intensely supervised as they had been for the previous twelve weeks but that they had gained much insight about their own competencies in writing appropriate IEPs with measurable student outcomes.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RESULTS

The district's special education teachers were not writing short-term objectives that were stated in measurable terms so that learner outcomes could be determined. The documentation of this problem was noted in the compliance review of October, 1992 conducted by the State Department of Education. Short-term objectives were task analyzed so that the stated goal was broken down into objectives. It was of utmost importance to have measurable objectives so at the student's annual review, the team determined what progress had been made in attaining the annual goals (Idol, Paoluccio-Whitcomb & Nevin, 1986; Mager, 1962; Popham, 1993; Smith, 1990; Strickland & Turnbull, 1990; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992).

The writer met with the teachers on a monthly basis and during these meetings training was given in the writing of appropriate goals and objectives. A parent questionnaire (Appendix A) was distributed to parents of special education students to gather data concerning their understanding of the IEP process, pre and post tests were given to the teachers (Appendix B) and a questionnaire was developed on specifying annual goals and short-term objective based on

Strickland and Turnbull works (Appendix C).

When the writer began to review the IEPs, five out of ten documents were returned to the teachers to be re-written because the short term objectives were not written in measurable student outcomes. The teachers were reminded to use verbs such as identify, write, explain, design. The use of these verbs made the short term objective measurable. As the implementation continued, fewer and fewer IEPs were returned to the teachers with notations concerning unacceptable IEPs. There was some confusion concerning the difference between a goal and a short-term objective. The writer stressed that the goal did not have to be written in measurable student outcomes. It was a projection for the school year of what the student could accomplish based on the student's current level of educational performance.

The sections of the IEP which did not need much rewriting were the student's level of educational performance, related services, extent student participates in regular education program, projection of dates that the program began and ended, appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures.

To analyze the results of the implementation of this training, pre and post tests were given to the special education teachers on writing performance objective (Appendix B). The results of the test indicated that the training was successful for writing appropriate goals and short term objectives with measurable student outcomes.

The teachers were asked to write questions one through five

in behavioral terms and post test scores yielded 100% accuracy. Questions six through ten asked teachers to write each statement so that they contained two components: (1) overall student behavior (2) indicate a standard or criterion of acceptable performance. The percentage of accuracy on the post test scores for questions six through ten were as follows: 86.3%, 96.6%, 82.8%, 96.6% and 79.4%. Questions eight and ten were the most difficult as indicated by the post test scores after the training.

The reason for this difficulty was that some teachers disagreed with Mager (1962) about the specificity of the objectives. Many teachers concurred with Dudley-Marling (1985) that the IEP provided them with an outline for instruction but not as a document to be used as a specific plan for daily instruction. The writer reminded the special education teachers of Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1990) statement concerning this document. "The IEP is one factor that differentiates special education from regular education" (p. 18). Whenever there is a mediation or a hearing concerning a special education student's program, the individualized education plan was very carefully reviewed by the mediator and hearing officer.

Some teachers asked the writer to review their IEP even though their document was not randomly selected to be sure that it was correctly written. Bloom's taxonomy was a great help for teachers when developing the short term objectives so they would be written in measurable student outcomes. It was a good tool to have whenever a team was developing an individualized education

plan.

Copies of five individualized education plans developed by the special education teachers after three months of training was enclosed (Appendix D). Each IEP had short term objectives that identified and named the overall behavior, defined important conditions and stated criterion for mastery.

The parent participation in the IEP process was a very important component when planning a child's special education program. When parents came to the planning and placement team meeting, many times they were intimated by the number of school personnel in attendance. Frequently because of this overwhelming feeling, the parents did not understand their rights and the rights of their handicapped child in relation to the IEP. The writer developed a questionnaire to gather data concerning the parent's understanding of the process. Table 1 is a summary of the results of the parent questionnaire.

Table 1

Results of Parent Questionnaire

Question	% SA/A	% NS	% SD/D
1-five day notice	100	0	0
2-understanding of specific terms	63.8	18.1	18.1
3-child's evaluation	90.3	1.3	8.3
4-staff response to questions	90.2	8.3	1.3
5-parents fear of asking questions	87.5	9.7	2.8
6-team listens to parent concerns	86.1	11.7	2.8
7-parent input into IEP	90.3	8.3	1.3

Key to abbreviations
SA/A - Strongly Agree/Agree
NS - Not Sure
SD/D - Strongly Disagree/Disagree

There was a twenty percent response to the questionnaire by the parents. The results from Table 1 indicated that parents understood the PPT process and also suggested that they understood such terms as present levels of performance, related services and short term objectives.

Although the data indicated that parents understood various terms, the highest percentage under the headings Not Sure and Strongly Disagree/Disagree was question two from the questionnaire. Question two asked parents if they understood such terms as least restrictive environment, present levels of performance, related services and short term objectives. This

was a red flag that the district's planning and placement teams should continue to ask parents at the meeting if they understood all the terms and made it clear that the team explained all terms if necessary.

Discussion

The writing of appropriate goals and short term objectives with measurable student outcomes for individualized education plans improved after training. The objective to improve the quality of writing of individualized education plans was met. As the supervisor of special education this means that the district was in compliance according to the State Department of Education compliance review, the special and regular education teachers could better communicate about the achievement of students in the regular education program, the parents had a better understanding of what it was their child had accomplish and the district was not going to loose state or federal monies.

Unexpected events happened during this implementation. The teachers first thought that the writer was treating them like students at the beginning of this process. As soon as the teachers became aware that the materials that were given to them were tools to help in writing appropriate IEPs, the resistance decline significantly. Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1956) taxonomy, chapter 9 of Strickland and Turnbull (1990) book entitled "Specifying Annual Goals and Short-Term Instructional Objectives" and Balasek, Kelleher, Lutz, Nelken and Rose's book

entitled Educational Planning Model Programmed Course for Writing Performance Objectives were all "hands-on" materials that the special education teachers could use daily when writing a child's IEP.

Some of the teachers asked for extra copies of the materials mentioned because their friends in other school districts were also experiencing difficulty in writing plans with measured student outcomes. The social workers and speech and language therapists from the district also asked for materials that were distributed to the special education teachers. The materials that were at first almost rejected, became tools frequently used by special education teachers, social workers and speech and language therapists.

A parent meeting held on November 4, 1993 brought many positive interactions between staff, administrators and parents. This meeting was the regular meeting held for special education teachers. There were thirty parents who attended the meeting. At the meeting, parents talked to other parents about their child's transition from the elementary level to the middle school and high school level. Many parents were very anxious about these transitions. The parents asked that evening meetings be held three times yearly so that they could become aware of any changes or new information on how to work and help their special education students. The parents inquired about receiving more information concerning attention deficit disorder, inclusive education and the use of the word processor for the reluctant writers.

A parent wrote the writer a note on the questionnaire and said that her responses were positive at this time but if she had been given this same questionnaire when her child was first identified as a learning disabled student, the answers would have been mostly negative. The writer called the parent and asked for an explanation to the comments. The parent told the writer that she was afraid to ask questions and when she did ask, she was told the staff would take care of her child not to worry. The number of people at the meeting was overwhelming and she did not understand the evaluation results. The parent felt she was in a "twilight zone" because everyone was using words she did not understand. Why was her child different? Why could she not learn like other students? When the parent left the meeting she did not have any new information concerning her child's strengths and weaknesses and she felt inferior as a parent.

This information validated what the writer thought frequently when attending these meetings and also what was reported in the literature. Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow (1992) report that there was a strong relationship between parent's being involve in their child's education and the student's achievement. Lytle (1988) report that the number of people on the school team was frightening to parents also Gartner and Lipsky (1987) report that the parent should be an active participant in the development of the child's assessment, program development and evaluation.

Based on the results of the teacher and parent

questionnaires, the school district was moving in the right direction to meet the special education student needs. The individualized education plan allow special and regular education teachers to communicate more effectively because the short-term objectives were written in measurable student outcomes. The district was now in compliance and did not loose any state or federal funding, the parent was becoming more and more of an active participant in the IEP process and the district was instituting parent workshop to cover a variety of topics concerning special education students. The document known as the individualized education plan was much improved since the implementation of the training.

Recommendations

The writer had several recommendations based on the results of this practicum. First, workshops should be held frequently to review the appropriate writing of individualized education plans with measurable student outcomes. A district should not wait until it was out of compliance before intervening in this process. Second, IEPs should be randomly reviewed by the administrator to determine if teachers needed more guidance in writing this document. Third, the parents should be encouraged to ask questions at the Planning and Placement Team meetings and parent workshops should become part of the district's professional development plans.

Dissemination

The results of this practicum were shared in the following way. The practicum and its results were submitted to the

Director of Pupil Personnel, the writer's immediate supervisor. Secondly, the results were shared with the special education teachers that participated in the training. Thirdly, as a member of Council of Exceptional Children, the results were submitted to the local Association of Special Education Administrators. The writer networked with other local school districts on the effectiveness of this training program and shared the strategies that were implemented within the writer's school district.

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APPENDIX A

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Parent Questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire by circling one category for each question.

1. The required five (5) day written notification is given to parents notifying them of the PPT meeting.	SA A NS D SD
2. The terms "Least Restrictive Environment, present levels of performance, program goals/ short-term objectives and related services" are terms that parents understand.	SA A NS D SD
3. The results of your child's evaluations are explained in detail to the parents.	SA A NS D SD
4. During the PPT meeting the team members answer your questions satisfactorily.	SA A NS D SD
5. As a parent and a team member of a PPT meeting you are not afraid to ask questions about any aspects of your child's program.	SA A NS D SD
6. As a team member at the PPT the rest of the team listens to your concerns about your child's program.	SA A NS D SD
7. As a parent you give input into the development of your child's Indivdualized Education Program (IEP).	SA A NS D SD

Key to abbreviations
SA - STRONGLY AGREE
A - AGREE
NS - NOT SURE
D - DISAGREE
SD - STRONGLY DISAGREE

APPENDIX B

TEACHER PRE AND POST TEST

Teacher Pre and Post Test

Write the statements below in behavioral terms.

1. The student will understand the laws of physics.

2. The student will know the different parts of the brain.

3. The student will know the four basic operations of arithmetic.

4. The student will appreciate the paintings of Van Gogh.

5. The student will enjoy the music of Mozart.

Write the statements below so that each statement will have the following components: (1) overall student behavior (2) indicate a standard or criterion of acceptable performance.

6. Given 10 math examples, John will complete all of them.

7. Given a map of the United States, the student will know all the New England states.

8. Given a paragraph to read, the student will read it well with 90% accuracy.

9. Given a sentence, the student will identify the noun, verb, and adjective.

10. Given 10 word problems, the student will get them correct.

APPENDIX C

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE ON WRITING ANNUAL GOALS AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE ON WRITING GOALS AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES USING STRICKLAND AND TURNBULL AS A GUIDE

Answer the following questions in short answer form.

1. What three criteria should be met when writing annual goals and short-term objectives for an IEP?

2. What does an annual goal represent for a student over a period of one (1) school year?

3. What six criteria will the IEP team follow when selecting goals for a student?

4. What is the hierarchy of educational objectives in the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy?

5. What three elements must be included in behaviorally stated objectives?

6. What is task analysis?

7. Develop a sample task analysis for an academic skill.

8. Develop a sample task analysis for a social skill.

9. Why might the curriculum guide be a good resource for developing goals and objectives for the student?

10. Name two positives and two negatives aspects of computer generated goals and objectives.

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS

STUDENT NAME _____ PROGRAM PLACEMENT _____ DATE OF PPT 12/3/93 PAGE _____
I. E. P.

PRESENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
(Academic Achievement, Prevocational/Vocational, Social/Behavioral, Self-help, Psychomotor)

Date	Test	Score(s)	Series & Levels of Instructional Materials Currently Used
	* See Page 1		Refresher Mathematics-Stein Mastering Computational Skills Teacher made materials Supplemental materials and texts Grade 9-1 year

INSTRUCTIONAL AREA Mathematics

LONG TERM GOAL To improve basic math skills

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA/METHOD/SCHEDULE		
1. Given a calculator, Tom will perform various math problems, demonstrating knowledge of calculator usage. 2. When given 10 problems requiring +, -, x and divison of whole numbers mastery will be shown three quarters of the time. 3. Tom will identify inches, feet, yards, quarts, pints, cups, teaspoons, and tablespoons. 4. Given 10 word problems Tom will decide which function must be used and will then complete each. 5. Tom will correctly identify a fractional part of a whole. 6. Given 10 fractions Tom will give an equivelent until mastery is proven. 7. Given 10 fractions Tom will reduce each until mastery is proven. 8. Given 10 fractions, both simple and compound, requiring the four basic operations, Tom will complete util mastery is proven.	#1-10 with passing grades 60% according to scale at FBS	attendance texts and supplemental materials participation small class groupings	daily record keeping chapter tests quizzes assignment completion teacher observation

Copies: White-Central Office; Yellow-School File; Parent-Pink; Gold-Staff

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STUDENT NAME _____ PROGRAM PLACEMENT L.D. / I. E. P. DATE OF PPT 10/15/93 PAGE _____

PRESENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

(Academic Achievement, Prevocational/Vocational, Social/Behavioral, Self-help, Psychomotor)

Date	Test	Score(s)		Series & Levels of Instructional Materials Currently Used
		Standard Score	Grade Equivalent	
10/93	KTEA			GE-reading — Focus Sing and Dance
	Decoding	76	2.2	I 64%
	Spelling	72	2.0	II 35%
	Readers Composite	80	2.6	III 73%
				IV 26%
				V 56%
				VI 20%
				VII 32%
				Irregular 75%

INSTRUCTIONAL AREA Language Arts

LONG TERM GOAL She will increase reading and written expression skills as assessed by pre/post testing

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA/METHOD/SCHEDULE
1. Will read/spell words with short vowels/one syllable/ single consonants	1-5 GE-pre/post testing 1,2,3,6, 80% accuracy 4,5 60% accuracy
2. Will read/spell words with short vowels/one syllable, consonant combinations	1-5 daily lessons teacher selected/ teacher made materials including
3. Will read/spell silent e words	Stevenson Program, Explode The
4. Will read/spell words using the silent e rule	Code, SRA corrective reading
5 Will read/spell words using the doubling rule	1-5 in isolation and in context
6. Will read/spell words with vowel teams	
7. Given a reading passage/passages of increasing difficulty ... will answer literal and inferential questions	80% accuracy daily classroom
8. Will participate in process writing procedures ..... a) prewriting; b) rough drafting; c) revision; d) editing; e) publishing	Teacher observation of participation and ongoing writing folder pre/post informal written language sample

Copies: White-Central Office; Yellow-School File; Parent-Pink; Gold-Staff

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STUDENT NAME _____ PROGRAM PLACEMENT EP L.D. Program I E P DATE OF PPT 11-18-93 PAGE _____

PRESENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

(Academic Achievement, Prevocational/Vocational, Social/Behavioral, Self-help, Psycnomotor)

Date	Test	Score(s)		Series & Levels of Instructional Materials Currently Used
11/93	KTEA	Standard Score	Grade Equivalent 1992/1993	5th grade class materials: Trade Books for whole Language and MacMillan English and Process Writing
	Reading Decoding	98 / 110	3.6 / 6.2	
	Reading Comp.	107 / 111	4.5 / 6.4	
	Gallistel-Ellis	Percent Correct 1992/1993		
	IV	53% / 100%		
	VII	72% / 84%		
	VIII	68% / 88%		
	IX	40% / 60%		
	Writing Sample - Below standards			

INSTRUCTIONAL AREA Written Expression

LONG TERM GOAL Improve written expression skills to a grade appropriate level.

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA/METHOD/SCHEDULE
1. Given a story Dan has written, with at least 5 sentences in it, four of the five sentences will be complete and not run-on.	1. 80% accuracy in a piece of writing-using Writing Samples and Charting
2. Write a descriptive paragraph using a topic sentence and at least 3 supporting details.	2. With 80% accuracy for sentence design and completion as measured on on writing samples.
3. Complete written assignments in the regular classroom (such as science or social studies notes and reports, or journal writing).	3. With 70% - or C work - as his average grade-or better

STUDENT NAME _____ PROGRAM PLACEMENT FHS-SEM DATE OF PPT 12-3-93 PAGE _____
I E P

PRESENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
(Academic Achievement, Prevocational/Vocational, Social/Behavioral, Self-help, Psychomotor)

Date	Test:	Score(s)	Series & Levels of Instructional Materials Currently Used
	* See Page 1		Student Anthology-Globe Book Co. Teacher made materials Supplemental Texts and materials Grade 9-1 year

INSTRUCTIONAL AREA English

LONG TERM GOAL Improve oral and written vocabulary and sentence structure

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA/METHOD/SCHEDULE		
1. Given a list of 15 words, Tom will define each and use each in a sentence. 2. Given a paragraph containing vocabulary words, Tom will recall, recognize and use each in a sentence. 3. Tom will be assigned short stories and both in oral and written form be asked questions concerning main ideas and details of events. 4. Given a paragraph, Tom will be asked to order events. 5. Tom will define parts of speech and their function. 6. Tom will identify proper punctuation. 7. Given 10 sentences, Tom will diagram each. 8. Given 10 sentences, Tom will properly punctuate each. 9. Given a topic, Tom will write a composition using proper grammar and punctuation.	@1-9 with passing grades 60% according to scale at FHS	attendance text and supplemental materials participation small class groupings	daily record-keeping chapter tests assignment completion teacher observations

Copies: White-Central Office; Yellow-School File; Parent-Pink; Gold-Staff

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STUDENT NAME _____ PROGRAM PLACEMENT FHS-SEH DATE OF PPT 12/3/93 PAGE _____
I. E. P.

PRESENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
(Academic Achievement, Prevocational/Vocational, Social/Behavioral, Self-help, Psychomotor)

Date	Test	Score(s) Standard Score	Series & Levels of Instructional Materials Currently Used
4/93	KTEA	Math - - - - - - - - 94 Reading - - - - - 107 Spelling - - - - - 85 Battery - - - - - - 92	N/A
5/93	B.E.S.	Behavior Quotient - 68	

INSTRUCTIONAL AREA Behavioral

LONG TERM GOAL To reduce frequency of inappropriate behaviors

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA/METHOD/SCHEDULE		
1. attend class daily, on time, prepared with text, notebook and pen/pencil. 2. adhere to class rules for behavior. 3. remain in class for the entire class period.	#1 with 75% accuracy	attendance monitoring reg. ed. classes small class groupings	daily record keeping assignments completed monthly consultation to reg. ed. teacher and office (more if necessary)

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Copies: White-Central Office; Yellow-School File; Parent-Pink; Gold-Staff